



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEMA RECRUITS VOLUNTEER FLORIDA DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TO MANAGE VOLUNTEER EFFORT IN AMERICAN SAMOA

Volunteer Florida Director of Emergency Management Alex Amparo represents Florida's State Emergency Response Team in responding to the tsunami in American Samoa ...

TALLAHASSEE – The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Volunteer Florida, is proud to announce that FEMA has recruited Director of Emergency Management Alex Amparo to support FEMA's efforts following the devastating tsunami in American Samoa Sept. 29. Amparo will work to support the Volunteer and Donations efforts in response to the disaster. Volunteer Florida serves as the lead agency for volunteers and donations as a part of Florida's State Emergency Response Team (SERT).

"We are so proud that a member of our team has been asked to assist FEMA in this devastating disaster," said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. "I believe Alex's expertise in managing volunteers and donations will help to facilitate a more rapid recovery for the people of American Samoa."

Amparo, who serves as the Emergency Coordinating Officer for Emergency Support Function 15 – Volunteers and Donations as a SERT member, has deep experience managing volunteer and donation efforts and coordinating the efforts of non-government organizations in response to disasters. Among Amparo's deployments to manage volunteer and donation efforts are: the 2001 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City; the 2003 Rhode Island Nightclub Fire; and Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and Louisiana in 2005.

(more)



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VOLUNTEER FLORIDA STAFF DEPLOYED TO AMERICAN SAMOA (Add One)

“As our thoughts and prayers go out to the survivors in American Samoa, we are honored that Alex has been tapped to support recovery efforts there,” said Florida Division of Emergency Management Interim Director Ruben D. Almaguer. “Once again we see that disasters truly have no borders and Florida’s State Emergency Response Team always stands ready to answer the call to service when there are people in need.”

The tsunami, which occurred Tuesday, Sept. 29, was caused by an earthquake, centered approximately 120 miles south of the islands of Samoa, which are home to 220,000 people. American Samoa, a U.S. territory, is home to 65,000 people. Following the earthquake, four tsunami waves 15 to 20 feet high roared ashore on American Samoa within 15 minutes, traveling up to a mile inland.

“I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to share the lessons learned through the many disasters Florida has experienced over the years,” said Amparo. “Among the many things I have learned as a member of the State Emergency Response Team is that Voluntary agencies are critical to *every* disaster recovery.”

Amparo will be deployed to American Samoa for at least the next two weeks, helping to establish systems to maximize the use of volunteers, voluntary agencies, and donated goods and services.

The Governor’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youth to seniors to people with disabilities; promotes volunteerism in emergency preparedness, response and recovery; supports the Governor’s initiatives through the development of innovative volunteer programs; and helps to strengthen and expand Volunteer Centers in Florida.

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Editors’ Note: High-resolution photographs of Alex Amparo working at the State Emergency Operations Center are available by calling 850-251-2834.

